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ABSTRACT

Designed to provide a historically accurate look at contemporary political refugees in Nebraska, this teacher's guide traces the life of the Martinez family from their native home in Latin America, through their difficult journey to the United States, to their settlement in Omaha, Nebraska. By focusing on a fictitious family representative of refugees that migrate from Latin America to the United States, students are provided with an objective look at these "modern pioneers" (los peregrinos modernos). Although intended for use with a series of eight 15-minute telecasts, the teacher's manual provides lessons that can be used independently of the telecasts. Designed for students in grade 4, lesson plans include objectives, pretelecast lessons, a description of the telecast, and immediate and extended follow-up questions. Students respond to an hypothetical situation by playing the role of reporter and responding to thought-provoking questions provided on reproducible "Reporter's Notebook" worksheets. Lessons focus on why people are refugees in the modern world, U.S. policies and attitudes toward refugees, the difficulty of assimilation, prejudice and discrimination, difficulties encountered by children in school and second language speakers, financial hardships and harsh winters, economic hardships, and cultural diversity. The guide concludes with two true stories about modern pioneers from Laos and from Puerto Rico. (LH)

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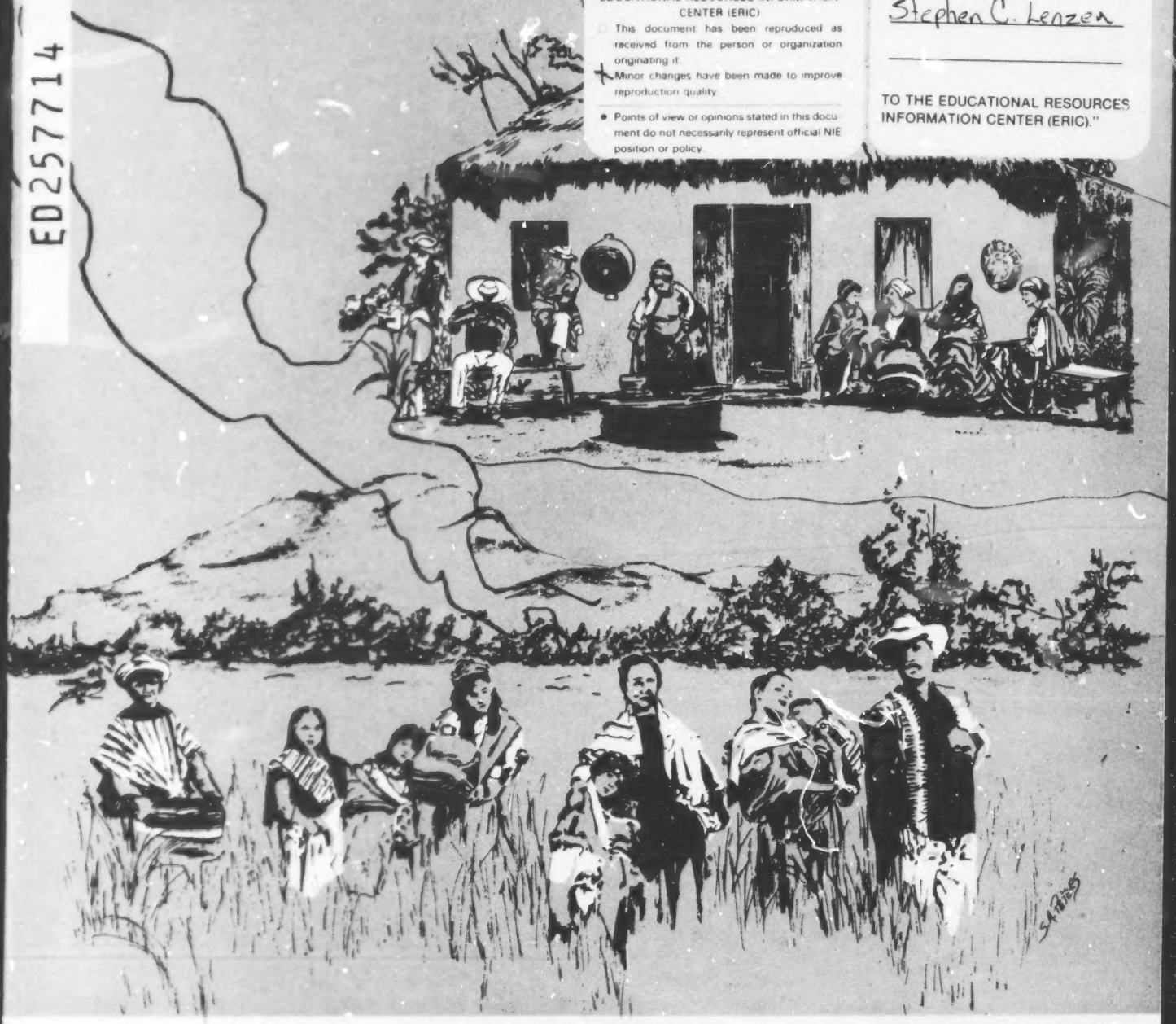

UNIT IV
WE ARE ONE:
Los Peregrinos Modernos

SP 016 487

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WE ARE ONE:
LOS PEREGRINOS MODERNOS

Teacher's Guide
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Issued by
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UNIT IV—WE ARE ONE: LOS PEREGRINOS MODERNOS

Unit III of **WE ARE ONE** presented the story of the Hanson family in Nebraska. It was a personalized representation of a great historic movement involving thousands of families who came to Nebraska in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Though the Hanson family is fictitious, the hardships they endured and the contributions they made to Nebraska are based on the very real experiences of the pioneers.

In the same way, Unit IV: **WE ARE ONE** presents the story of a family which represents the great movement of the modern pioneers--those who must move from their native land and seek new homes and new futures in another country.

The Martinez family story is traced from their native home in Latin America, through their difficult journey to the United States and Nebraska, to their resettlement in Omaha. The problems and hardships they must endure every step of the way are representative of those difficulties that refugees face as they come to this country in great numbers to seek new lives in a new land.

By focusing on a single family, it is hoped that a part of our contemporary situation will become real and understandable to fourth-grade students. As each child views these programs, and shares in the joys and sorrows of the Martinez family and those who help them, the child gains a personal understanding of the trials of these modern pioneers.

We live in a world of rapid changes. For a variety of reasons, people are on the move throughout the world. Demographers are now projecting that a significant portion of the population of the United States will be non-English speaking by the end of the 20th century. The bulk of new arrivals will be coming from Latin American. They are the modern pioneers.

Like those who came from Europe in an earlier day, the modern day pioneer must leave family and friends in seeking a new future. They come to the United States for the same reasons people have always come to this country. They seek religious and political freedom. They seek economic opportunities. They seek a brighter future for their children. The process of assimilation is as painful for the modern pioneers as it was for those of yesteryear.

But the free land and the open frontier are gone. Most modern pioneers wind up in urban America where they must quickly learn the rules of survival. Language and values are principal areas of difficulty. They face prejudice and discrimination. They have little social status and are usually ignorant of how the "system" works. In Nebraska, the new pioneers are unprepared for the extremes of weather, especially the bitter winters. Sending children off to large schools, having mothers work outside the home, having the family separated for most of the day can be threatening. And all of these problems must be tackled at once.

The story of the Martinez family presents a dramatic message to students which is moving and yet cognitively significant. Seldom is a set of momentous events personalized for children. But the Martinez family offers children an understandable story of an important contemporary occurrence. It allows children to empathize with the modern day pioneers. It also allows children to take an objective look at their own country. Children can begin to understand that America continues to evolve. America is not a finished product. Traditional American values and beliefs remain in place despite our shortcomings.

In viewing the programs, remind the children that the Martinez family is a Spanish speaking family. In producing the telelessons the decision was made to use English whenever members of the family are speaking to each other. This was necessary so that the viewing audience, which is largely English speaking, can understand the dialogue. The telelessons contain short exchanges in Spanish at various points so that the viewing audience is always reminded that Spanish is the language of the family.

One last note. At the end of this guide you will find two true stories about modern pioneers, people who have come to this country for different reasons. These stories are to be read orally to the class. The people and the events in the stories are real. The stories reinforce the content points which are imbedded in the lessons about the Martinez family. Feel free to use these stories at any point in the unit you judge to be appropriate. Maps are included with the stories for your convenience, but you may want to help the youngsters locate the places in the world where the events in the stories took place. Take time to discuss the people who are the characters in the stories. Question the children about how these people must have felt. Even though the people in the stories did not relocate in Nebraska, the circumstances that brought them to the United States and the problems they faced once they arrived in this country are quite similar to the experiences of the Martinez family.

With these thoughts as a basis for developing this series of lessons, **LOS PEREGRINOS MODERNOS (The Modern Pioneers)** is presented to you and your students.

A NOTE TO THE STUDENT:

In the olden days, when pioneers came to Nebraska, they often kept diaries or wrote letters to their families back home. Some of these letters and diaries have been saved, and they tell us a lot about how the pioneers lived and how they felt about their lives.

In these days, there are modern pioneers in Nebraska. They are people who have had to leave their own country and who come here to start a new life, just as the pioneers did in the olden days.

But in these times, we often learn about the new pioneers because reporters from newspapers or radio or television tell us about them. The reporters are all over the world, telling us about the kinds of troubles that drive people from their home country, and the kinds of problems they face when they go to a new land.

Now you can be a reporter, too. As you watch the story of the Martinez family, you can find out about the country in Latin America where they were born; you can watch them as they make the dangerous journey to America; and you can see how they learn to live in Nebraska.

Your reporter's notebook is ready! Your first stop is at the home of Raul and Bernarda Martinez. They live on a farm in a war-torn country in Latin America. Their country is in the middle of a civil war. Watch out for danger here--it will be all around you.

Unit IV
Lesson One

THE HOMELESS

OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce main characters:

MARTINEZ FAMILY
Papa - Raul (a farmer)
Mama - Bernarda
Children:
- Luis
- Maria
- Tomas
- Elena
- Carmela
- Rosa

Grandmother (Raul's mother)
Uncle Ramon (a rebel fighter)
Uncle Roberto (living in U.S.) and his wife, Sally.

GOODWIN FAMILY
Father - George
Mother - Winnie
Children:
- Jacob
- Chelsea

2. To help young children understand why many people are refugees in the modern world by focusing on the turmoil surrounding the Martinez family and the pressures on them to leave their farm.

3. To establish reasons for the modern pioneer family to come to America—safety, freedom, education, and equality.

   To provide an opportunity for children to explore some traditional American values, such as safety, freedom, public education, and equality.

BEFORE THE TELECAST:

Hand out the reporter's notebook page for report #1. Go over the question so the student reporters know what they are to look for.

TELEVISION DESCRIPTION

The program begins with Uncle Roberto in a church in Omaha, making a plea for people to help resettle Latin Americans who come to the city. As he describes the plight of his own family the scene shifts to his brother Raul and the life of his family on the farm in Latin America. The presence of soldiers, the danger Ramon faces as a freedom-fighter, the atmosphere of suppression are portrayed. The strengths of the homeland are also seen in the closeness of the family members and the ties to the land that the Martinez family feels.

But when news comes that Ramon has been killed, the family is forced to flee or face imprisonment and even death.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW—UP

1. Allow time for student reporters to complete their reports.

2. Select one of the following activities:

   a) have the students hand in their reports for you to check.
   b) have the students write a short news article, based on their notes.
   c) provide time for students to discuss their observations, based on their notes.

EXTENDED FOLLOW-UP

1. As Americans, we often take things for granted. Recall the situation of the family we saw on the telelesson. What things do we enjoy as Americans that the Martinez family was denied? In helping youngsters examine that question there may be some important areas that should be noted.

   1) Safety. Generally, Americans feel free to go places and be safe. We think nothing about this.

   ASK: HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU LIVED IN A PLACE WHERE RIVAL GROUPS OF ARMED PEOPLE ROAMED ABOUT AND YOU COULD BE VICTIMIZED BY THESE GANGS AT ANY TIME?

   2) Freedom. Americans are free to move about. They are free to speak out and say what is on their minds.

   ASK: HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU LIVED IN A PLACE WHERE YOU COULD BE PUNISHED FOR SAYING SOMETHING AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT?

   ASK: HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU LIVED IN A PLACE WHERE YOU COULD BE PUNISHED FOR GOING SOMEWHERE WITHOUT ASKING PERMISSION?

   3) Education. In America we have a system of public schools. All boys and girls are entitled to attend school at the public's expense. The belief is that education is critical for the good of the individual and for the good of society.

ASK: HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU LIVED IN A PLACE WHERE BOYS AND GIRLS COULD NOT GO TO SCHOOL, BUT HAD TO WORK LONG HOURS FOR SURVIVAL EVERY DAY?

4) Equality. Americans believe that all citizens are entitled to equal treatment under the law. No person is above the law.

ASK: HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU LIVED IN A PLACE WHERE THE LAW IS WHAT SOME RULER DECLARES IT TO BE? HOW COULD THE RULER USE THE LAW TO HELP HIS FRIENDS AND HURT HIS ENEMIES? WOULD THAT BE FAIR? WHY CAN SOME RULERS GET AWAY WITH USING THE LAW ANY WAY THEY WANT TO?

THE WRETCHED REFUSE

OBJECTIVES:

1. To help young children develop a sense of empathy for the plight of modern refugees in making their way to a new country of refuge.

2. To help young children understand why and how some modern refugees are processed and placed once they come to the United States.

3. To help young children compare the journey of modern pioneers to America with that of earlier immigrants.

BEFORE THE TELECAST:

Hand out the reporter's notebook page for report #2. Go over the questions so the student reporters know what they are to look for.

TELEVISION DESCRIPTION:

As a church group meets to discuss plans for resettling a family, Roberto announces that his own family has made it to America. He begins to describe their journey, and the scene changes to a "no-man's land" where the family is seen making their way to the coast.

Contact is made with a fisherman who takes people out of the country on his boat--for a price. The Martinez family borrows money for the journey and boards the boat under cover of night. The difficulties of the journey are portrayed, as are the strengths of this family as they take care of each other.

The U.S. Coast Guard intercepts the boat and takes the refugees to land where they are held until their identity can be established and a sponsor can be found.

The church group enthusiastically offers to sponsor the Martinez family.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

1. Allow time for student reporters to complete their reports.

2. Select one of the following activities:

   a) have the students hand in their reports for you to check.
   b) have the students write a short news article, based on their notes.
   c) provide time for students to discuss their observations, based on their notes.
   d) use the notes as the basis for a picture which illustrates the hardships of the journey.

EXTENDED FOLLOW-UP

1. Discuss how the journey made to America by the modern pioneer family was like that of the 19th century immigrants who came to this country.

   ASK: HOW WAS THE BOAT TRIP THE MARTINEZ FAMILY MADE LIKE THE ONE THAT PIONEER FAMILIES MADE ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO?

In considering the above question, perhaps these elements could be explored with the children:

a. Dangers: Dangers faced in getting to port, and dangers on the sea
b. Discomforts: Ships were crowded, food was terrible, seas were rough.
c. Expenses: Families gave up practically all of their possessions to make the journey.
d. Apprehensions: Families worried about surviving the journey, and their future was unknown to them.

2. Discuss the fact that American authorities held the Martinez family until they could be placed.

   ASK: WHY DO YOU THINK OUR GOVERNMENT HOLDS REFUGEES INSTEAD OF JUST LETTING THEM GO AS SOON AS THEY GET TO THE UNITED STATES?

Help children understand this question by exploring the problems these people have:

...They have no home to go to.
...They have no jobs
...They cannot speak English
...The immigration authorities needed to find some person or group who would act as hosts, and help immigrants in getting started in America

Unit IV
Lesson Three

THE HUDDLED MASSES

OBJECTIVES:

1. To help young children begin to understand and develop a sense of empathy for the modern pioneer family. (People who come to a new land and must by necessity rely totally upon others for their basic needs.)

2. To help young children realize how dependent they are upon their parents for meeting their basic needs.

3. To help young children begin to consider what they would do to help a group of people in need.

4. To help young children think about what they personally regard as important about living in Nebraska.

BEFORE THE TELECAST:

Hand out the reporter's notebook page for report #3. Go over the questions so the student reporters know what they are to look for.

TELEVISION DESCRIPTION

The Goodwins and Roberto meet the Martinez family at the airport in Omaha. The family appears very tired and bewildered. Papa carries all their possessions in one cardboard box.

Roberto takes the family through their new home, showing them the modern conveniences, assuring them that they can buy Spanish food, and warning them to keep the door locked.

A few days later, Mrs. Goodwin comes to alter some clothes for the family to wear, and she and Chelsea discover the art of communicating without spoken words.

Chelsea and her father discuss Mr. Martinez and his unhappiness at being so dependent on others in this new home.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

1. Allow time for student reporters to complete their reports.

2. Select one of the following activities:

   a) have the students hand in their reports for you to check
   b) Have the students write a short news article, based on their notes
   c) provide time for students to discuss their observations, based on their notes
   d) use the notes as the basis for a picture which illustrates the hardships of the journey

EXTENDED FOLLOW-UP

1. In order to help understand how the new immigrant family felt in coming to Nebraska, develop a list of ways in which the children themselves were dependent upon their parents.

   ASK: WHEN YOU WERE VERY SMALL, WHAT DID YOU DEPEND ON YOUR PARENTS FOR? THAT IS, WHAT DID THEY NEED TO DO FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU COULD NOT DO IT YOURSELF?

The list could include feeding, clean clothes, housing, love, medical care, etc.

THEN ASK: NOW THAT YOU CAN DO MOST OF THOSE THINGS FOR YOURSELF, YOU ARE MORE INDEPENDENT. BUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOURSELF IF SUDDENLY YOU HAD TO DEPEND ON SOMEONE AGAIN TO FEED YOU, BATHE YOU, CLOTHE YOU, ETC?

Help children imagine how the modern pioneer family felt when suddenly they were like small children. They couldn't speak or be understood, or understand those around them. They needed others to give them food, clothing, and a place to live. They need others to take them around so they wouldn't get lost in the city.

Remind them that the Martinez family came from a rural area and are not familiar with life in a big city.

2. Discuss ways in which Americans can help families relocate here.

   ASK: IF YOU WERE A SPONSOR FOR THE MARTINEZ FAMILY, WHAT WOULD BE SOME THINGS YOU WOULD DO TO MAKE THEM WELCOME IN NEBRASKA?
   REMEMBER: UNLESS YOU SPEAK SPANISH, YOU CAN ONLY COMMUNICATE THROUGH AN INTERPRETER.

3. Have children consider the good things Nebraska has to offer.

   ASK: IF YOU WERE A SPONSOR, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT THE MARTINEZ FAMILY TO KNOW ABOUT NEBRASKA? WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM? WHAT WOULD YOU SHOW THEM?

Unit IV
Lesson Four

YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE

OBJECTIVES:

1. To help young children understand the concepts of prejudice and discrimination.

2. To help young children explore the traditional American value of justice as it pertains to the treatment of persons and groups under the law.

3. To help young children empathize with the modern pioneer family and its continuing struggle to learn and use the English language.

BEFORE THE TELECAST:

Hand out the reporter's notebook page for report #4. Go over the questions so the student reporters know what they are to look for.

Note that they are asked to write a story which includes their opinion. Explain that news reporters are allowed to put their own opinion into stories if they are editorials, or if their name appears on the story so people know that the story contains opinions and not just facts.

TELEVISION DESCRIPTION

Mr. Goodwin and Jake visit a member of the church who owns a greenhouse, hoping that the man will hire Mr. Martinez. However, the man turns them down, explaining that he doesn't believe that foreigners should be brought into this country to take jobs that "real Americans" need. Jake thinks the man is mean, but Mr. Goodwin explains that this is a hard question and people differ about what we ought to do when so many people desire to live in our country.

When jobs are found for the Martinez parents, Mr. Martinez reacts with some anger over two issues: 1) that he must work in the kitchen doing "woman's work"; and, 2) that Mrs. Martinez is expected to work to help support the family. The differences between the cultures is explored here as he airs his grievances.

Even on the job, there are difficulties arising from the difference in cultures and the problems with understanding a new language. But the receipt of the first paycheck makes everyone feel better and is a cause for celebration and sharing of the money with relatives and friends.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

1. Allow students adequate time to complete their reports and to write their newspaper story.

2. Provide some way for students to read or listen to each other's stories and opinions about dealing with the problem of immigration.

3. a) Stories could be read in small groups
   b) Stories could be posted for others to read
   c) You could select several which clearly state an opinion or solution to the problem and read them to the class.

EXTENDED FOLLOW-UP

1. Discuss the concept of prejudice.

ASK: WHAT DOES THE WORD "PREJUDICE" MEAN?

Develop the idea that it means to "pre-judge" someone without having any basis for judging them.

ASK: WHY WOULD OTHERS PRE—JUDGE THE MARTINEZ FAMILY? WHAT MADE THEM "DIFFERENT" SO THAT PEOPLE WOULD PRE—JUDGE THEM?

List such things as appearance, language difference, last name is Spanish-sounding, they are from a different country, they are from a different culture.

ASK: WHY IS IT WRONG TO BE PREJUDICED?

Help children explore the idea that no one can determine the worth of an individual or a group of people based on such things as color, language, religious beliefs, place of birth, etc.

ASK: DO WE HAVE LAWS TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM PREJUDICE?

Be sure that children are aware that such laws do exist: laws against segregated school systems, against discrimination in hiring, laws ensuring that all adults can vote and hold office.

ASK: WHY WOULD AMERICA HAVE LAWS TO PROTECT PEOPLE'S RIGHTS?

Lead the children in understanding that Americans value the individual person. Our laws, our political and social institutions, even our system of justice are set up to afford maximum protection of individual rights and freedoms.

SEND THESE TO ME

OBJECTIVES:

1. To help reinforce the understanding of the concept of prejudice and discrimination.

2. To help young children understand how difficult it would be to succeed in school without a complete comprehension of the language of instruction.

3. To help young children develop a sense of empathy and compassion for those who have difficulty succeeding in school.

4. To help young children develop a deeper appreciation for the American value of justice as it pertains to individual relationships.

BEFORE THE TELECAST:

Hand out the reporter's notebook page for report #5. Go over the questions so the student reporters know what they are to look for.

Note the question in which they will be able to make suggestions and give their opinions.

TELEVISION DESCRIPTION:

When Mrs. Goodwin goes to the Martinez home to help the children on their first day of school, she finds Roberto there. He has come to find out why Mr. and Mrs. Martinez are not at work, and discovers that they have stayed home to see the children off.

Once again, the difference in cultures is explored, for the supervisor expects the parents to be at work, while they feel their job is to be at home on this special day.

At school, the children are in an ESL (English as a Second Language) class for part of the day to help them learn the language. Their interactions with other children are sometimes positive, and sometimes negative. Maria is especially sensitive to her lack of friends and shares her feelings with Grandmother.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

1. Allow students adequate time to complete their reports.

2. Select one of the following activities:

a) have students hand in their reports for you to check
b) have students write a short news article, based on their notes
c) provide time for students to discuss their observations, based on their notes

d) use the notes as the basis for what Luis or Maria might write in their diaries about their first day of school

EXTENDED FOLLOW-UP

1. Discuss the adjustment Maria and Luis had to make to their new school

ASK: WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKE MARIA AND LUIS FEEL GOOD ABOUT BEING IN A NEW SCHOOL?

THEN ASK: WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKE MARIA AND LUIS FEEL UNHAPPY ABOUT BEING IN A NEW SCHOOL?

FINALLY, ASK: WHAT COULD BE DONE IN OUR CLASS TO MAKE EVERYBODY FEEL WELCOME AND GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES?

2. Discuss the concept of acceptance and respect for individual differences.

ASK: DO YOU THINK MARIA AND LUIS WANTED TO DO WELL IN SCHOOL?

THEN ASK: WHEN STUDENTS HAVE TROUBLE IN SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY CANNOT DO THEIR WORK CORRECTLY, HOW DO THEY FEEL?

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO MAKE THEM FEEL BETTER?

WHAT CAN OTHER KIDS DO TO MAKE THEM FEEL BETTER?

HOW COULD THEY BE HELPED IN DOING THEIR WORK?

As the teacher, you should remind the children that many famous and successful people had trouble in school, including Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Thomas Edison. But they went on to accomplish great things.

People have different ways of learning, and it is up to the schools and the people in the schools to respect these individual differences and to try to help everyone do the best they can in whatever way they can do it.

GIVE ME YOUR POOR

OBJECTIVES:

1. To help young children understand how winter can be a severe time of year which can work great financial hardships on those who can least afford it.

2. To help young children develop a sense of empathy for persons who, through no fault of their own, may need assistance from their fellow citizens to meet their basic needs.

3. Provide an opportunity for young children to develop a plan of social action in which they make an effort to reach out and help others in need.

BEFORE THE TELECAST:

Hand out the reporter's notebook page for report #6. Go over the questions so the student reporters know what they are to look for.

TELEVISION DESCRIPTION:

Just before Christmas, the Goodwins visit with the Martinez family. Everything seems to be going well with them, and Mr. Goodwin explains that they feel it is time to leave them alone and let the Martinez family be more independent. He stresses that they can turn to the church group for help at any time.

Winter strikes, and at first it seems novel and wonderful to the family. But as the heat bills rise, there is less money for food and the family's health deteriorates. Depression sets in, and the Martinez family is in serious straits.

The Goodwins pass by, just to check on the family, and Luis tells them of the family's serious problems. Sally and Roberto are contacted, and Mr. Goodwin outlines some welfare programs that the family can qualify for.

When Jake seems shocked to think that the family would be "on welfare," Mr. Goodwin explains the sound social purposes of the welfare programs.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

1. Allow students adequate time to complete their reports.

2. Select one of the following activities:

   a) have students hand in their reports for you to check
   b) have students write a short news article, based on their notes
   c) provide time for students to discuss their observations, based on their notes

EXTENDED FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

Discuss the problem America must deal with in having people who find themselves without enough money for food, clothing, or shelter.

ASK: WHY WASN'T THE MARTINEZ FAMILY PREPARED FOR THE NEBRASKA WINTER?

If necessary, remind children that they came from a more tropical climate where the weather was fairly warm and mild all year round.

ASK: CAN YOU THINK OF OTHER REASONS WHY SOME FAMILIES HAVING SERIOUS MONEY PROBLEMS——EVEN FAMILIES WHO LIVE HERE IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Help children understand that many people have lost jobs and cannot find work; that people have accidents or illness which prevents them from working; that a mother with young children may find it impossible to work and care for the children; that some people do not have enough education to get a job that requires reading and writing.

ASK: WHAT SHOULD A COMMUNITY (OR A STATE, OR A COUNTRY) DO FOR PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE MONEY ENOUGH TO FEED THEIR FAMILY OR PAY TO HEAT THEIR HOMES?

Let children do some creative thinking about this. Where it is appropriate, provide some information about social service agencies in your own community:

...County welfare offices
...Salvation Army and other church groups
...United Way agencies
...Any local programs with which you are familiar

FINALLY, ASK: WHAT COULD A CLASS LIKE OURS DO TO HELP FAMILIES IN NEED?

Explore some possibilities: donating clothing and food; raising money through some project or raffle; collecting aluminum cans and using that money to donate to an agency.

If possible, ask someone from a social service agency to come to your class with two purposes in mind:

1. To personalize welfare by telling students the stories behind some of the clients they serve.

2. To help students find a way in which they could help serve a family in need.

Unit IV
Lesson Seven

GIVE ME YOUR TIRED

OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide an opportunity for young children to visit with their parent(s) covering the role and importance of work in the life of an adult.

2. Help young children develop a sense of understanding and empathy for persons who are displaced in the work force.

3. Provide an opportunity for young children to think about the opportunities in the work force that await them in the future as an adult.

BEFORE THE TELECAST:

Hand out the reporter's notebook page for report #7. Go over the questions so the student reporters know what they are to look for.

TELEVISION DESCRIPTION:

Roberto helps Papa find a used car to buy, and Papa proudly drives it home. (Did you know that in Nebraska, we have a Spanish driving test?) The children are overjoyed to think they own this important American status symbol; but Mama, thinking of their debts and expenses, is very unhappy.

Papa tries to cheer her by telling of another raise he has received, and the promise of a promotion. But shortly after the purchase of the car, he is injured on the job, and is told that he can never return to the kind of work he has been doing.

Papa is very depressed, and even when Mama brings home her paycheck, he sees no way out of their predicament. In his desperation, he conceives of a plan to take his family back to Latin America.

Luis and Maria, alarmed at this turn of events, contact the Goodwin children and ask for their help.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

1. Allow students time to complete their reports.

2. Select one of the following activities;

   a) have students hand in their reports for you to check
   b) have students write a short news article, based on their notes
   c) conduct a telephone conversation between the Martinez children and the Goodwin children. Have the Martinez children explain what has happened and how Papa is dealing with it. Let the Goodwin children offer some creative solutions.

EXTENDED FOLLOW UP

1. Have students interview their parents about the value of work.

Any or all of the following questions could be given to them for the interview:

1. What do you do in your job?
2. How did you learn to do your job?
3. What do you like best about your job?
4. If you could change your job in some way, how would you change it?
5. How does your job help other people?
6. How does your work make you feel about yourself?
7. How would your life be different if you lost this job?

2. Based on the discussions with their parents, ask the children to think about the plight of Mr. Martinez.

ASK: WHY DID MR. MARTINEZ FEEL SO USELESS AFTER HE LOST HIS JOB?

ASK: WHY DID HE THINK IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE TO COME TO AMERICA AND TO NEBRASKA?

ASK: WHY DO YOU THINK HE WANTS TO GO BACK HOME?

ASK: CAN YOU THINK OF ANY WAY TO GET HIM TO CHANGE HIS MIND AND STAY IN NEBRASKA?

3. This is a good opportunity for youngsters to do some thinking about work as it applies to themselves. Have them project 25 years into the future. Have them write a story about work they will be doing and what the world will be like 25 years into the future.

Unit IV
Lesson Eight

I LIFT MY LAMP BESIDE THE GOLDEN DOOR

OBJECTIVES

1. Help young children appreciate the diverse population of the United States as one important factor in building a great country.

2. Help young children appreciate the diverse nature of Nebraska's population.

3. Help young children appreciate the sacrifices that each generation of Nebraskans has made for the ultimate benefit of modern Nebraskans.

BEFORE THE TELECAST

Hand out the reporter's notebook page for report #8. Go over the questions so the student reporters know what they are to look for.

Note that the last two questions ask them to express their own opinions.

TELEVISION DESCRIPTION

Mrs. Goodwin happens to see the children near the movie theater, making a list of ways to keep Papa in Omaha. They explain their work to her, and she agrees to help them.

At school, Mrs. Garcia gives Luis and Maria a book about Nebraska which indicates that every group of people who came to this state had to make sacrifices: the Native Americans; the pioneers; and Black Americans who were freed from slavery. She suggests that they tell their father about these other people who faced some of his frustrations.

Roberto and the supervisor from the hospital come with news that Papa can return to work in another kind of job. It is at this point that Papa tells Roberto of his plans to go back home. Roberto tries to be sympathetic while at the same time he tries to convince Papa to stay.

Mr. Goodwin pays a visit to Papa for the purpose of bringing him some gardening tools. Although Jake wants his father to talk to Mr. Martinez about not leaving, Mr. Goodwin refuses to do that.

However, the tools and Papa's love of the land convince him to stay a while longer and give it another try. Although there are still many problems ahead, the Martinez family has taken a big step toward adjusting to their new life here.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

1. Allow students time to complete their reports
2. Select one of the following activities:

a) have students hand in their reports for your to check;
b) have students write a short news article, based on their notes;
c) write a letter that Papa might write to his uncle in Latin America, explaining why he is not coming back after all

EXTENDED FOLLOW—UP

1. Discuss the future of the Martinez family

ASK: DO YOU THINK THE MARTINEZ FAMILY WILL REMAIN POOR AND HIGHLY DEPENDENT UPON OTHERS FOR A LONG TIME TO COME?

WHY OR WHY NOT?

ASK: WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF LUIS AND MARIA AND THE OTHER CHILDREN?

DO YOU THINK THEY WILL SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND BECOME WELL-EDUCATED AND SUCCESSFUL ADULTS?

WHY OR WHY NOT?

ASK: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT THEY WILL FACE IN THE YEARS AHEAD?

Help children understand that the family still has the language barrier to overcome. The job situation may remain unstable indefinitely. There is still a clash of values.

2. Discuss the contributions of other cultures to America.

ASK: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE GOODWINS LEARNED FROM THE MARTINEZ FAMILY?

Help children identify the strong points of the Martinez culture;
...Strength of the family
...Respect of children for adults and elderly
...Sense of sharing all good news and possessions with family and friends
...Trying to keep the family together by having time together
...Building pride in children to do well so that the family can be proud

ASK: CAN YOU THINK OF CONTRIBUTIONS OTHER CULTURES HAVE MADE TO AMERICA?

Children may be oriented to things rather than values, but let them make a list of such things: ethnic foods, ethnic music, ethnic stories.
Most Christmas customs come from some other country.

REPORTER _____

DATE _____

REPORT #1: LOCATION _____

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS:

1. Who are the people in the Martinez family? _____

2. Why do they want to get out of their country? _____

3. Why do they want to go to America? _____

4. If they do go to America, how could their life be better? _____

5. How could their life be worse? _____

REPORTER _____
DATE _____
REPORT #2: LOCATIONS _____

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: COVER MARTINEZ FAMILY ON THE WAY TO THE COAST, AT THE COAST, ON THE SEA, AND IN AMERICA. QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED ARE THE FOLLOWING:

1. How did the Martinez family get from their farm to the coast? _____

_____

_____

_____

2. How did they manage to get out of their country? _____

_____

_____

_____

3. What were they afraid of? _____

_____

_____

_____

4. What problems did they have during their boat ride to America? _____

_____

_____

_____

5. Why do you think people like the Martinez family go on such dangerous and terrible journeys to get to America? _____

_____

_____

_____

REPORTER _____

DATE _____

REPORT #3: LOCATION _____

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: COVER THE MARTINEZ FAMILY ON THEIR FIRST DAY IN OMAHA.

QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED:

1. How does the family seem to feel when they arrive at the airport? _____

_____

_____

_____

2. How is their house in Omaha different from the one in Latin America? _____

_____

_____

_____

3. How did the Goodwins and others from the church help the Martinez family get settled in Omaha? _____

_____

_____

4. How will Papa's life be different now that he is in Omaha, and not on his farm in Latin America? _____

_____

_____

5. How is life better for Luis and Maria in Nebraska? And how is it more difficult?

_____

_____

_____

REPORTER _____
DATE _____
REPORT #4: LOCATION _____

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: COVER THE MARTINEZ FAMILY AS MR. AND MRS. MARTINEZ FIND JOBS AND GO TO WORK. SOME QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER ARE:

1. Why would some people **NOT** want to hire Mr. Martinez? _____

_____

_____

_____

2. When jobs were found for the Martinez parents, Mr. Martinez was not happy. Why was he upset? _____

_____

_____

3. Why would Mr. and Mrs. Martinez have trouble being good workers when they do get jobs? _____

_____

_____

4. When they get their first paychecks, what do they do with the money? _____

_____

_____

_____

5. Write a story about what you have seen, and include your own opinions in it. What should America do when so many people want to come to our country? Can we take care of everybody? Who should be allowed into the country? What would you say to people who believe America should just be for "real Americans?"

REPORTER _____
DATE _____
REPORT #5: LOCATION _____

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:
COVER THE STORY OF THE MARTINEZ CHILDREN ON THEIR FIRST DAYS IN SCHOOL. SOME QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER ARE:

1. How do the children feel about school before they go there? _____

2. How does Mr. Martinez feel about the children going to school? _____

3. How do the other children at school treat Luis and Maria? _____

4. How was the school set up to help children who do not know English?

5. In your opinion, what could be done to make it easier for children like Luis and Maria to get along well in school. _____

REPORTER _____

DATE _____

REPORT #6: LOCATION _____

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:

COVER THE MARTINEZ FAMILY BEFORE AND AFTER CHRISTMAS. SEE HOW THEY COPE WITH THEIR FIRST COLD WINTER IN NEBRASKA. SOME QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER ARE:

1. How did the family feel about the coming winter before they really experienced long weeks of cold and snow? _____

2. What problems do they have when the cold weather hits them? _____

3. How do they try to solve those problems? _____

4. Why don't they turn to Roberto or the Goodwins for help? _____

5. How does Mr. Goodwin feel about welfare programs? _____

REPORTER _____

DATE _____

REPORT #7: LOCATION _____

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:
COVER THE MARTINEZ FAMILY DURING THE TIME WHEN MR. MARTINEZ IS OUT OF WORK. SEE HOW THE FAMILY FEELS ABOUT THIS, AND WHAT KINDS OF PLANS THEY MAKE TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.

1. Why does Mr. Martinez think he can afford to buy a car?_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How does the family feel about their new car? _____

_____

_____

_____

3. What happens to Mr. Martinez that makes him lose his job? _____

_____

_____

_____

4. What does Mrs. Martinez think they should do after Papa loses his job?

_____

_____

_____

5. What does Mr. Martinez think they should do? _____

_____

_____

6. What do Luis and Maria think they should do? _____

_____

_____

_____

REPORTER _____

DATE _____

REPORT #8: LOCATION _____

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:
COVER THE MARTINEZ FAMILY AS THEY MAKE THE DECISION WHETHER TO STAY IN NEBRASKA OR RETURN TO LATIN AMERICA. NOTICE THE WAYS IN WHICH MANY PEOPLE TRY TO GET THEM TO STAY. SOME QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER ARE:

1. How do the adults find out that Mr. Martinez is planning to leave? _____

_____

_____

_____

2. How does Mrs. Garcia help Maria and Luis try to talk Papa into staying in Nebraska? _____

_____

_____

3. How do Roberto and the supervisor try to convince him to stay? _____

_____

_____

_____

4. What does Mr. Goodwin do to try to get Papa to stay? _____

_____

_____

_____

5. Why do you think Mr. Martinez would stay in Nebraska? _____

_____

_____

6. What do you think will keep the family in Nebraska the next time they have serious problems? _____

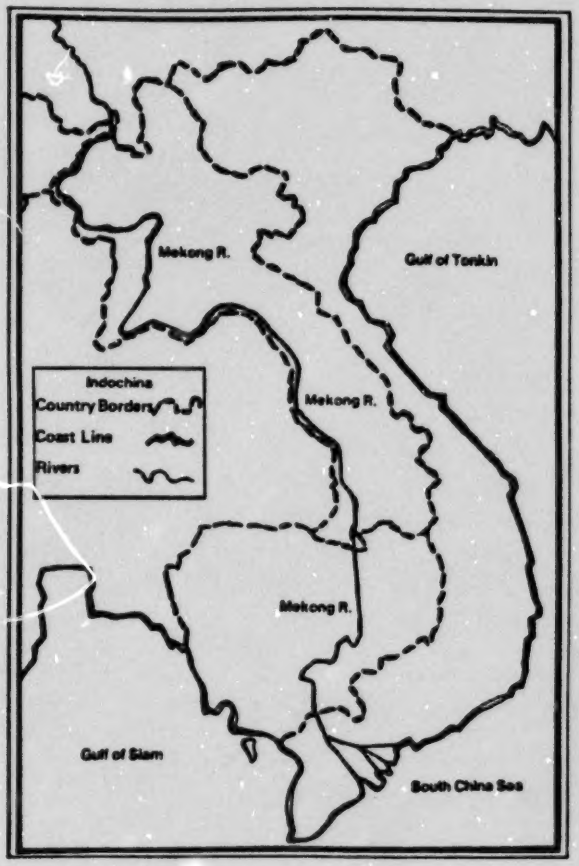
_____

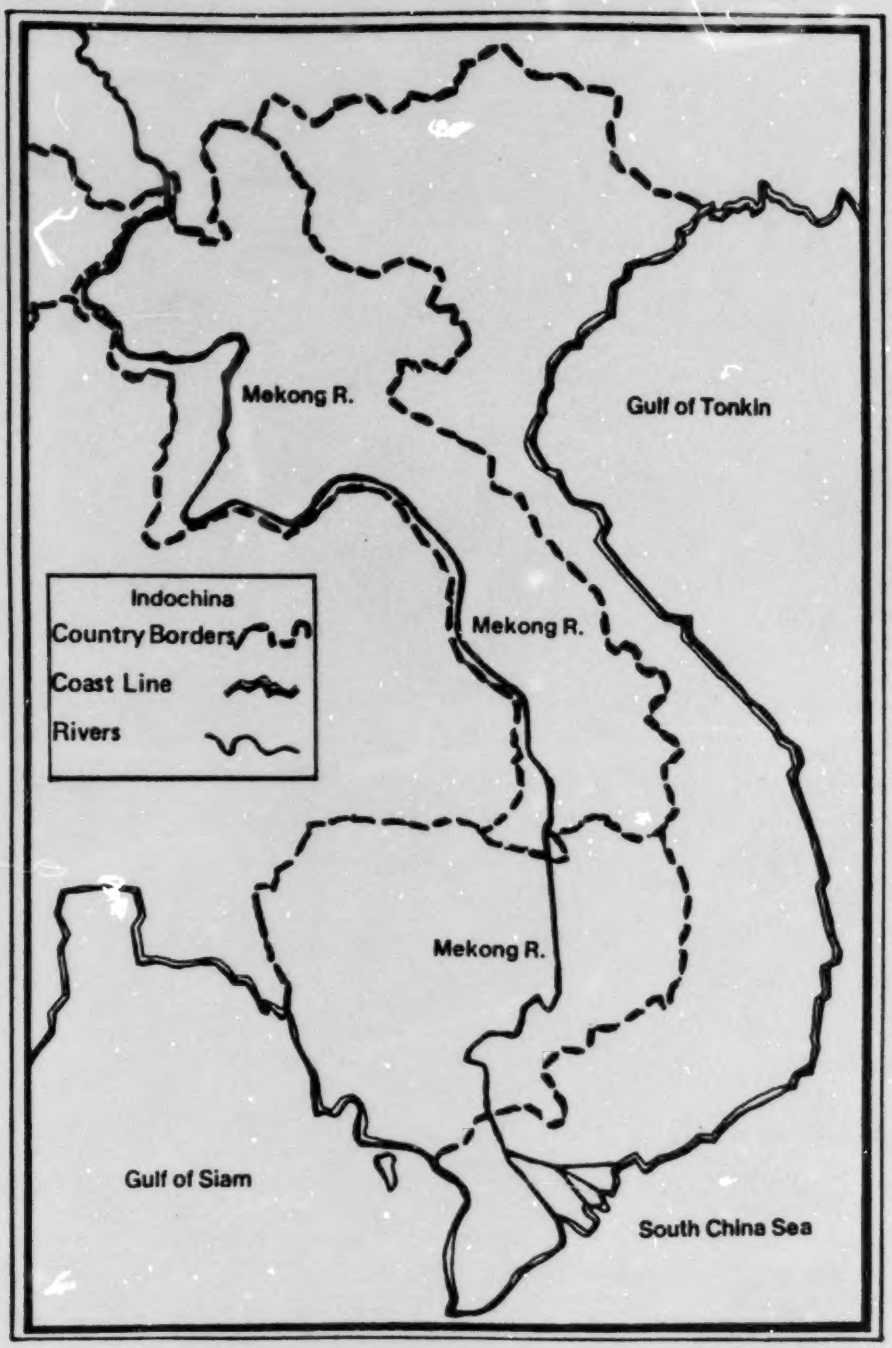
Story 1 — Nao Leng
From "OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY"
Laos: Geography

Laos is a small, **land-locked** country on the continent of Southeast Asia. It is bordered on the North by Burma and China, to the West by Vietnam, on the South by Kampuchea and to the Southeast and East by Thailand.

The population is guessed to be about 3,000,000 (3 million) people. This is about the size of the city of Philadelphia. The country is covered with hills and very high, jagged mountains. Most of the people in Laos live along the Mekong River Valley. Other people live in the high mountain areas of the North. Laos is a **tropical** country. The hot, rainy season begins in May and lasts until October. Then there is a dry season for the rest of the year.

Laos is a country of great beauty. There are no big cities, few railroads and poor roads. Years and years of war, fighting, and foreign rule have made it difficult to bring modern changes and improvements to Laos.




Mekong R.
Gulf of Tonkin
Indochina
Country Borders
Coast Line
Rivers
Mekong R.
Mekong R.
Gulf of Siam
South China Sea

Nao Leng's Escape

Background

In 1954 Laos became an **independent** nation. After a **civil-war** started in Laos, different groups tried to gain control of the country. For years war raged. People took sides during this civil war. One people, the Hmong (Mong) were particularly effected by this war. Some of them fought on one side and others fought on the other side. For 14 years the war continued. In 1972, a **cease-fire** was declared between the sides. After the cease-fire, a new communist government called the Pathet Lao took control of Laos.

While this was going on, the war in Vietnam was also continuing. By 1960 many American soldiers were in Laos. They built a secret air-base in the mountainous homeland of the Hmong people. From this base helicopters could take off to attack Vietnam. The American soldiers persuaded many Hmong people to help them. By the time the war in Vietnam had ended in 1975, nearly 30,000 Hmong had died in the war. When the Americans left Laos those Hmong who had helped feared for their lives and decided to leave also. This is the story of one Hmong boy's experience.

independent	not relying on others for support or help
civil-war	war between opposing sides within a country
cease-fire	temporary end

Life in Laos

As a child, Nao Leng lived with his ten brothers and sisters in a small village on a high **plateau.** His house was built so that he could always look out at the high mountains covered with green, **lush** forests. The air was cool and fresh, filled with the sound of singing birds. The forests were filled with **game** to hunt. There were swift flowing mountain streams that provided water for the village.

The Hmong people were farmers. In the dry season all the men cleared the land by burning the trees and shrubs. Then, at the beginning of the wet season rice, cotton, corn, potatoes, and other vegetables would be planted. This type of farming which is practiced in many places all over the world is called "slash and burn."

The Hmong also grew **opium** which was their only **cash crop.** The opium was sold at market for silver. The silver was stored in bars of fashioned in jewelry. The jewelry was worn by the women and children. Although Nao Leng's family raised many small farm animals, their most prized possessions were two beautiful horses. These horses were useful for hunting and for the long and dangerous ride down the mountain trail to the nearest market. It took nearly 3 days to reach the marketplace.

Nao Leng was happy in his peaceful, **remote** village. He and the other children in the village did not go to school. There were none. They spent their days learning the jobs they would need to know when they became adults. They learned to ride a horse, plant crops, hunt for game in the forest and use the cross-bow which hung on the wall of each house. Nao Leng could spend hours playing his favorite game of spinning tops with some of the other boys in the village.

Nao Leng's house was one of eight in the village. He lived in a wooden house with his father and mother, brothers and sisters, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. When things became crowded, one of his uncles would build a house next door and move in there with his wife and children. All the relatives belonged to his father's household. His father was highly respected and everyone listened to his advice. No one ever disagreed with his father except in very polite and gentle ways. His father had helped with the birth of all his brothers and sisters, including himself. Nao Leng loved his huge family. It was the center of his world. He always had someone to play with and someone to care for him. He was never alone.

plateau	high, flat land
lush	alot, abundant, plentiful
game	wild animals
opium	drug taken from the poppy plant. (It was used as a pain killer by the Hmong. It can be dangerous, habit forming drug. It is illegal to buy or sell opium in many parts of the world. It was not illegal in Laos at the time the Hmong were growing it.)
cash crop	a crop that is sold mainly for money and not home use
remote	isolated, far away from other people.

Grandfather Chong enjoyed telling stories and young Nao (Now) Leng loved listening to them. There were no books to read because there was no written language. All he knew was passed on through stories told by his grandfather and the other elders in the village. According to custom, Nao Leng would retell these stories to his grandchildren when he became an **elder.** Nao Leng's favorite story was the one that told how great, great grandfather had fled from China on foot. Although the Hmong people were not Chinese, they had lived as farmers in China for many thousands of years. They were **bullied** out by **hostile** neighbors.

Great, great grandfather and other Hmong came to live in the high mountains of northern Laos. Since no one else was willing to live in that **rugged terrain,** the Hmong were left to farm in peace for many years.

elder	oldest male member of the family who was seen as as leader among the people
bullied	to be pushed around by someone stronger
hostile	threatening
rugged terrain	rough, mountainous land

The War and Escape

All the time while Nao Leng was growing up, his father would return from market with stories about the war that was raging all about them. Although his own village was undisturbed, Nao Leng heard frightening stories of other villages being bombed and burned by enemy soldiers. As early as 1971, friends and relatives were going off to join **guerrilla** army forces. These guerrilla fighters were helping American soldiers who were fighting in the mountains against the Vietnamese.

Then, in 1975 the war in Vietnam came to an end. The American soldiers began to leave Laos. The new government in Laos wanted to punish those Hmong who had helped the Americans. One day, news reached Nao Leng's village that 17 men and boys in a neighboring village had been shot by government soldiers for co-operating with the American soldiers.

The villagers became very frightened. They thought they, too, would be killed. Nao Leng's father met with all the other household elders to discuss what to do. They decided that the following day the entire village would leave. They would travel south to the neighboring country of Thailand where they hoped they would be safe.

Everyone spent the next day preparing for their departure. Then, in the middle of the night, the entire village of 200 people headed quietly down the slippery, **treacherous** trails. They carried nothing with them but a little food, some weapons, and opium to give the babies to keep them sleepy and quiet. When enemy patrols came near, they left the trails and cut throught the deep forests. An old American compass, left behind by a soldier, helped point the way south.

For two months, the men, women, and children walked wearily through the forest, up and down hills, always careful to avoid the enemy. Nao Leng's father was an old man. The tiring trip and lack of food made him weak and ill. One morning he died quietly. A hurried grave was dug and Nao Leng said a last good-bye to his father. He ran on to catch up with the others. There was no time to mourn.

At last they came to the Mekong River, the last test before reaching the safety of Thailand. Many people could not swim. In the dark of the night they made simple rafts out of bamboo. Everyone worked quickly and quietly for fear that they would be discovered. It was important to make it across the river before morning. At dawn, the rafts seemed ready to carry the passengers across.

Suddenly, gun shots were heard and an enemy patrol came into view. Nao Leng and his older brother jumped into the river and started to swim across. His sister-in-law and her children, already on a raft got caught in the swift current. She began to drift rapidly down the river. She was never seen again.

People on the shore began to run in **panic.** Some tried to swim across the river but became tired and drowned. Some paddled their rafts to safety. As Nao Leng looked back he saw his mother and sisters being led away by enemy soldiers. He continued swimming until he reached the opposite shore. He was too tired and frightened to understand the **tragedy** that had just happened.

Soon, he and his brother were picked up by some trucks and taken to the nearest refugee camp, Ban Vinai (Ban Ve nay), with other survivors from his village. Nao Leng suddenly realized that he would never see the other members of his family again. He broke down and wept. He had just reached his fourteenth birthday.

Conditions in the camp were unhealthy. People lived in crowded, tin-roofed bamboo shelters. He lived with 23 people in a very small space. Life in the camp was boring because there was nothing to do and no place to go. Fresh water for drinking was **scarce.** The cup of rice received each day for food was just enough to keep him alive.

Near starvation and disease weakened the **survivors.** The hot, steamy climate of Thailand caused many Hmong, who were used to cooler mountain climates, to become ill and die. More food was brought into the camp after awhile when some of the American volunteers complained to our government.

Nao Leng was sure that he wanted to come to the United States. He was told that he would have to wait until someone in the United States would agree to **sponsor** his brother and him. He ended up waiting for three years.

guerrilla	a person who belongs to a small band of soldiers they attack the enemy by surprise
treacherous	dangerous
panic	sudden fear
tragedy	a terrible, unhappy experience
scarce	very little, not plentiful
survivors	people who continue to live
sponsor	a person or organization that takes responsibility for settling a refugee in this country.

Preparing to Leave

Suddenly, one day, quite by surprise, Nao Leng and his brother were told that they would be leaving the refugee camp. They would be flying to Philadelphia where a sponsoring organization was waiting to greet them.

All of their friends came to wish them good-bye. A **shaman** performed a little ceremony to attract the spirits to return to the bodies of the boys so that they would be protected as they travel. Friends crowded near to tie strings around their wrists in the belief that the strings would keep those protecting spirits inside their bodies. Everyone cried and waved good-bye as the bus was loaded to take the group to the airport. Good-byes were sad because they were final. Nao Leng knew he would never see his friends or country again.

The plane left from Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. The plane's first stop was Paris, France. When Nao Leng and his brother got out of the plane he was shocked to see a cold, white covering on the ground. He had never seen snow before. He did not own any winter clothes and he was very cold. The pilot felt sorry for the boys and gave them blankets to wrap around their shoulders. After spending one night in Paris, the plane took off and finally brought them to Philadelphia.

shaman a medicine man

In Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, at the airport, Nao and his brother were met by people from his sponsoring organization. This organization had agreed to accept responsibility for taking care of Hmong families when they first arrive in the city. The organization would find the boys a place to live and would teach them how to get along in a big city.

The ride into the city from the airport was exciting and puzzling. Never before had the boys seen such tall buildings, so many cars and so many people. The boys wondered where the trees and land were. All they could see for miles were cement roads and cement sidewalks.

The first few months in the city were frightening and confusing. The boys could not speak English. No one could understand them. They were afraid of getting lost. They were afraid that the American people would not treat them well so they stayed in their apartment most of the time.

Learning to ride on the buses was too confusing, so the boys walked many miles each day to attend English language classes. They learned to shop in supermarkets but found that everything in the store was either cold or in a box or can. Eating American food was going to take some getting used to.

In the fall, the boys were enrolled in English classes in high school. Although they began to learn to speak English very quickly, learning to read and write presented another problem. Never having been to school, the boys found learning to read English and write the English alphabet extremely difficult. They had to spend many long hours at night studying and trying to understand their homework assignments.

The boys had difficulty making American friends. Some of the children laughed at the way they looked and talked. Others sometimes tried to be friendly by slapping Nao Leng on his back. Nao Leng did not understand this kind of play. In his own country, hitting someone at all was considered very rude and insulting. But the most difficult thing the boys felt was coming home each day to an empty apartment, closed off from everyone, without parents and relatives nearby. Nao Leng and his brother felt very lonely and sad.

One day, Nao Leng and his brother decided to walk to the zoo. They became lost. A policeman came to help. In Laos, policeman were feared. The boys became frightened. Nao Leng told his brother to walk away so that if the policeman captured one of them, the other would be able to help him escape. As the policeman **approached,** the boys thought of running. They stayed frozen to the ground. The policeman was very friendly. He tried to give them directions to the zoo. It took a long time for the boys to stop being afraid. Finally, the policeman offered to take the boys to the zoo in his car. The boys still did not trust the policeman. They refused to get in the car but agreed to follow him. What a sight to see a policecar driving slowly over the 34th St. bridge to the zoo with two frightened Hmong boys walking slowly behind!

After completing his first year in high school, Nao Leng spoke English well enough to join the regular high school classes. He and his brother met many other Hmong living in Philadelphia. They joined a Hmong soccer team. Nao Leng found he liked American music and learned to play a guitar. Together with his brother and some friends he organized a small rock band. Nao Leng is not sure what he wants to do when he graduates from High school but he is thinking about becoming a mechanic. He feels that if he works hard he will have a chance for a better life in America.

Nao Leng and his brother had survived a terrible war. Although he had seen his whole way of life **shattered,** he had shown courage and strength. If he had been able to come so far in his very short, young life, we know that his dreams of success in this new land will come true.

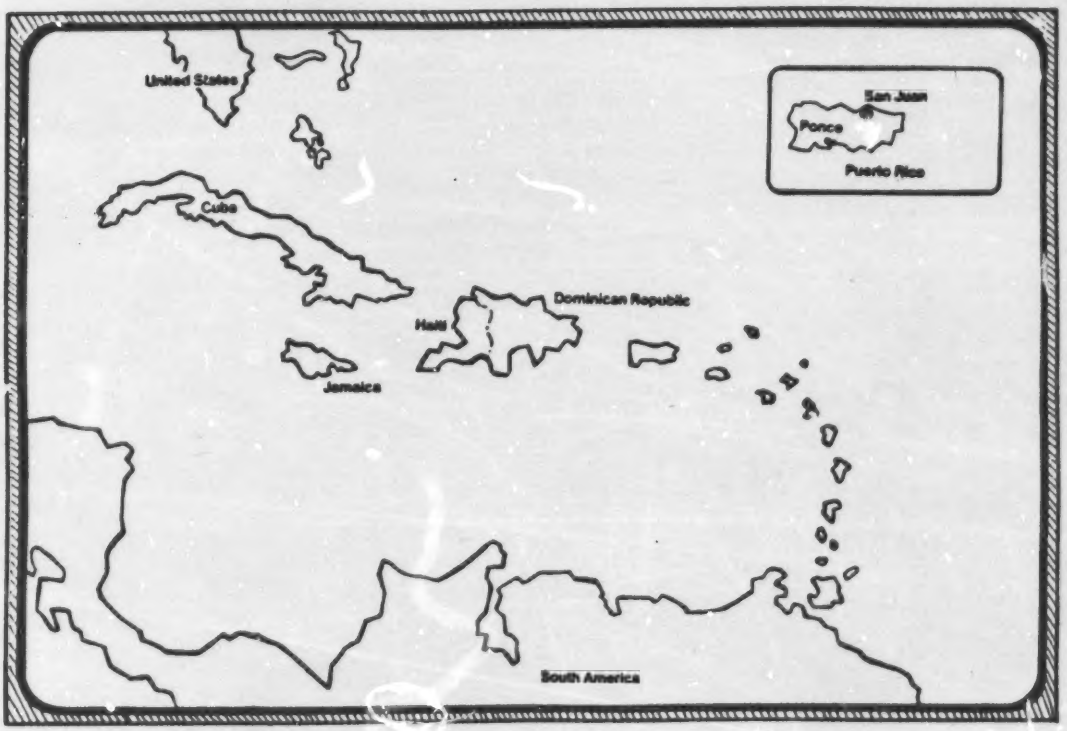
approached came near
shattered broken

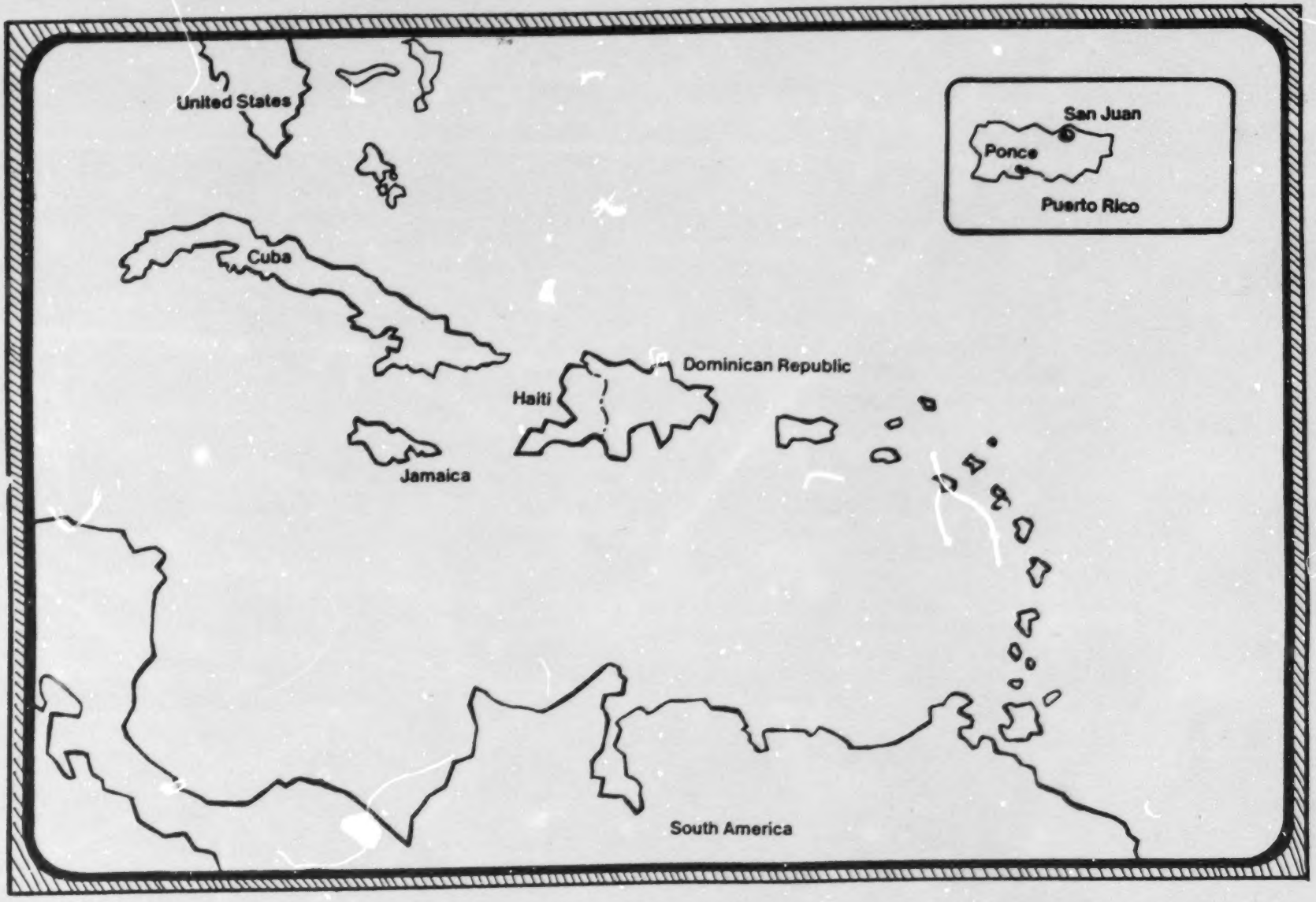
Story 2 — Ramon Sanchez
From "OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY"
Puerto Rico — Geography

Puerto Rico is one of a chain of islands called the Great Antilles. Cuba and Jamaica are other islands in this chain. Puerto Rico is bordered on the north by the Atlantic Ocean and on the south by the Caribbean Sea.

Puerto Rico is 1,050 miles from Miami, Florida. It is a small island, about 100 miles long and 35 miles wide. You could probably drive around the entire island in less than a day.

Its lush, green countryside and sandy beaches make it one of the most beautiful islands in the Carribbean. It has a warm climate with plenty of sunshine and rain all year around. Many people from the United States like to go to Puerto Rico for winter vacations because of the warm weather and pleasant beaches.




United States
Cuba
Haiti
Dominican Republic
Jamaica
South America
San Juan
Ponce
Puerto Rico

Ramon Sanchez
Background

Christopher Columbus discovered the island of Puerto Rico on his second trip to the New World in 1493. He took possesion of it for Spain. In 1898 at the **conclusion** of the Spanish-American War, Spain lost and gave Puerto Rico to the United States.

The island became a **colony** of the United States. In 1952, Puerto Rico became a commonwealth. This meant that Puerto Ricans were allowed to make and **enforce** their laws, so long as those laws were not harmful to the United States. It also meant that Puerto Ricans were citizens of the United States. They were free to travel back and forth to the United States, just as you are free to travel from state to state.

Puerto Ricans began coming to live in the United States in the early 1900's. In the 1950's, large numbers of Puerto Ricans came to live here. They came because they were looking for work and a better life. What they found when they got here were low paying jobs, poor housing and racial discrimination.

By the year 1970, nearly 1,500,000 Puerto Ricans were living in the United States. Although Puerto Ricans are still moving to the United States, many are also returning to live in Puerto Rico. Some travel back and forth every few years. The following story tells about one family's journey to Philadelphia.

conclusion	the end
colony	any people or territory separated from but subject to a ruling power
enforce	to make obey

Life in Puerto Rico

When Ramon Sanchez was a small boy he would walk many, many miles each day to attend school in a nearby village. At that time, the United States Government, which owned Puerto Rico, decided that all Puerto Ricans should learn English. The government insisted that all subjects be taught in English only. The children could not understand what was being taught. They didn't like being forced to speak English. It made them ashamed of their own Spanish language. School was a confusing place for a little boy. As Ramon grew older, he was needed by his father to work on the farm and to earn money for the family. He stopped going to school when he reached the fourth grade. He had not learned to read or write. He was **illiterate.**

When he grew up, Ramon **inherited** seven acres of rocky and hilly land. He met Nilda, a young girl from a nearby village. They married and over the years had six children. Ramon often worried about his family. It was a struggle to earn enough money to feed and clothe his family. He wanted his children to learn to read and write. He wanted them to have an easier and a better life than he had.

Ramon supported his family by cutting sugar cane for half of the year. He earned only 60 cents an hour. In the dead season, there was no work because the cane was growing. Ramon sold vegetables that he grew on his own farm. Nilda tried to help out by earning money doing sewing at home for a factory in the nearby city of Ponce. (Pon-say) This kind of work was called **piece work.**

illiterate	not able to read or write
inherited	passed down from one generation to another
piece work	work done and paid for by the piece rather than by the hour

Economic Changes

At this time, big changes were taking place in the countryside and cities of Puerto Rico. American businessmen were buying up all the small coffee and sugar cane farms. They only wanted to grow sugar cane on huge farms in order to make more money. This put many small farmers off the land. Now, these farmers had no land and no jobs. They could only work in the sugar cane fields for half of the year. (The work was seasonal.) They earned very little money for this difficult labor. Many men went to the cities to look for work in the new factories which were springing up. There were many more people than jobs. **Unemployment** became a big problem. Many people from Ramon's village began leaving for the **mainland** to look for steady work. Even Ramon's uncle, aunt and cousins had gone.

unemployment	being without a job
mainland	term used to mean the United States

Preparation for Leaving

After the sugar-cane harvest, Ramon also decided to go to Ponce to look for work. He thought perhaps he could earn more money working in a factory but soon got laid off. He returned to his home in the countryside feeling very **discouraged.** How would he support his family?

One day he received a letter from his cousin who lived in Philadelphia. His cousin urged Ramon to leave Puerto Rico. He told Ramon that it was easy to get a job picking tomatoes in New Jersey for $1.60 an hour. Ramon thought that sounded like a great deal of money.

Ramon was tired of the back-breaking work in the cane fields. He was tired of not working during the dead season. He worried about not having enough money to support his family. He made a decision. He, too, would go to the mainland to work. Ramon told Nilda his plan. She did not want him to leave but agreed it was the only solution to their problem. He promised that as soon as he had earned enough money for the plane tickets, he would send for the family. So, selling his small farm, Ramon bought a ticket and took a bus to San Juan. From there he flew to Philadelphia. Nilda moved to the city of Ponce to live with some relatives and to work in the needlework factory until Ramon sent for her and the children.

discouraged that there was little hope

In Philadelphia

Life in Philadelphia was difficult for that first year. Ramon missed his family. He had a hard time getting used to the cold, snowy winter. Because he knew little English, Ramon had to accept very low-paying jobs. He picked tomatoes for a while. Then he found a job washing dishes in a restaurant. Later he worked in a hotel. He was a hard worker and never got fired from any of his jobs. He frequently changed jobs trying to find one that would pay him a little more money.

Ramon lived in a crowded apartment with all of his relatives. He could not afford a place of his own because he was saving money for Nilda's plane tickets. The neighborhood was very run down. Still, Ramon felt more comfortable living with his Puerto Rican neighbors because they spoke Spanish and made him feel at home. He **rarely** left the neighborhood except to go work. He was afraid of meeting people who spoke English. Once he had been called an insulting name because of his skin color and his **accent.** It was difficult for Ramon to understand this. In Puerto Rico the color of one's skin made no difference. Whites and Blacks lived together and all regarded themselves as Puerto Ricans.

Finally, after a year of struggle, Ramon was able to send Nilda the plane tickets that would bring her and the children to Philadelphia.

The day arrived. Ramon met the family at the airport. They were all happy to be **reunited.** It had been over a year since they had seen each other.

After getting settled in a small apratment of their own, Nilda tried to get a job. At first she worked peeling potatoes in a hotel kitchen. The floor was always damp. Her feet got wet. She often became ill and could not work. Then she found another job working as a maid in a Center City hotel.

Meanwhile, Ramon enrolled the children in school. The children owned no winter clothes. Ramon and Nilda would have to find the money to buy them coats, hats and warm gloves. They would also have to buy the children school bags, books and pencils. They were happy to find out that the children would receive free lunches in school.

In school the children had difficulty because they could not speak English. They were confused by the great numbers of students, the long halls with many doors, and the up and down stairs. They felt homesick for Puerto Rico.

As time passed, the children learned to speak English faster than their parents. Although they continued to speak Spanish at home, the younger children soon became used to speaking English.

rarely	not often
accent	a different way of pronouncing the words because his Spanish language background
reunited	brought together again

Returning to Puerto Rico

The Sanchez family continued to move often. Ramon and Nilda always kept trying to find a house that was a little bigger or a little better. Sometimes this meant moving the children from school to school. After two years, Ramon and Nilda decided that they wanted to return to Puerto Rico for a visit. Nilda wanted to see her aged mother. They missed their old friends and many of their relatives who were still there. One night, without too much notice, the whole family boarded a plane for Puerto Rico. The grown-ups felt it was good to be home. The children were not so sure. Ramon decided to remain in Puerto Rico for several months during the cane harvest. This way he could earn some money for the return trip.

The children had difficulty getting used to life in Puerto Rico. Their friends made fun of their poor Spanish. They were left back a year in school because they could not write Spanish very well. They began to look forward to the return to Philadelphia.

With the cane harvest over, the Sanchez family returned to Philadelphia. The children had missed a great deal of work in school. They had trouble catching up. The oldest became discouraged and quit school to get a job. He wasn't sure if he wanted to live in Puerto Rico or the United States. He felt he didn't quite belong in either place.

As Ramon and Nilda look to the future, they hope that the younger children will someday finish school. They know that education and training will be important in order to get better paying jobs. Ramon and Nilda also look forward to the time when they can save enough money to return to Puerto Rico for good. Perhaps some of their children will find better opportunities in Puerto Rico. Perhaps some will choose to remain in the United States. In any case, Ramon and Nilda would like to spend their last years on the island of their birth.

What's Your Opinion??

Status is a very important issue in Puerto Rico. Some people think that Puerto Rico should become an independent nation. They are angry because Puerto Ricans are citizens but do not have all the rights Americans have. For example, Puerto Ricans cannot vote for President of the United States. They also believe that the problems of poverty and unemployment on the island could be solved if Puerto Rico was an independent nation.

Other people believe that Puerto Rico should become the 51st State. They say that since Puerto Ricans are already citizens, why not make Puerto Rico another state so that the people can enjoy equal rights with Americans.

Other people believe that the Island should remain part of the Commonwealth as it is now. This is a very **controversial** issue and is often discussed among Puerto Ricans living in the United States and those living in Puerto Rico.

controversial opposing points of view; different opinions